

# Forest Plan Components— Objectives

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An objective is a concise, measurable, and time-specific statement of a desired rate of progress toward a desired condition or conditions. Objectives should be based on reasonably foreseeable budgets (36 CFR 219.7(e)(1)(ii)).

Describe the focus of management in the plan area within the plan period

Must be based on achieving and monitoring progress toward desired conditions

Must be stated in measureable terms with specific reasonable time frames

Help set criteria for priority areas or activities, with a timing expectation that near-term objectives would be completed first, depending on funding

Must be based on budgets and other assumptions that are realistic expectations for the selected period of time

Are neither actions nor commands to take action and are not to be written as such; must not use terms like “must”, “will”, or “shall”

Are informed by the best available scientific information

## Measurable

An increase of, or to increase XXX

A decrease of, to decrease XXX

Creating, or to create XXX

Establishing, or to establish XXX

Removing, or to remove XXX

Adding, or to add XXX

Maintaining, or to maintain XXX

Eradicating, or to eradicate XXX

Restoring, or to restore XXX

Developing, or to develop XXX

Closing, or to close XXX

## Time-specific

“by XXX date”

“annually,” or “each year”

“within X years of plan approval” (Note: The starting point must be clear.)

“on average,” XXX “annually”

## Examples

Precommercial thinning XX to XX acres by 2010

Prescribed burning X acres annually.

Harvesting 1 million board feet of merchantable timber each year.

Increase the percentage of early successional oak-hickory forest habitat from the existing 1% of National Forest System (NFS) lands to 3% to 5% of NFS lands in oak-hickory by 2020.

Over the planning period, to maintain 2,200 acres identified as existing longleaf pine in 2006 as longleaf pine woodlands.

To restore 1,500 linear feet of unstable stream channel by 2020.

Develop a heritage resources interpretive trail within 5 years of Forest Plan approval.

Eradicate at least of 400 acres of tamarisk annually.

Close 1–2 miles of unauthorized trails annually throughout the plan period, considering the following priorities:

- Trails impacting archeological sites
- Trails impacting rare plant communities
- Trails impacting streamside forests

At the end of the first decade of the plan—

- Approximately 600 acres of the 3,600 total acres of southern loess bluff forest are in the 0- to 10-year age class (from conversion).
- The estimated 61,000 acres of the northern dry upland hardwood forest ecosystem have received a fire return interval of 1-6 years, with 15-25 percent of the burns conducted in the growing season.
- At least two new driving tours are developed to highlight unique forest features, scenic routes, heritage sites, or seasonal natural interests.
- At least 1,800 previously infested acres are free of invasive species.

## Unacceptable and Acceptable Objective Statements

### Example 1

#### *Unacceptable*

During the next 15 years, a watershed-habitat rehabilitation program would be developed or maintained to help with the preservation and recovery of aquatic systems. Practices would stress reaching appropriate riparian and upland vegetation conditions eliminating human-made fish passage barriers, ensuring proper drainage systems for roads, and restoring native vegetation and natural channel geomorphology.

#### *Acceptable*

Remove fish passage barriers from at least 25 more miles of streams within 15 years of plan approval

Establish proper drainage systems on at least 30 more miles of road within the first five years of the plan.

Restore native vegetation and natural channel geomorphology on 5 miles of stream by 2020.

#### *Differences*

The acceptable example has specific times and measurable terms. The acceptable example does not direct the means of accomplishing the objectives.

### Example 2

#### *Unacceptable*

Dispersed recreation sites may be closed, rehabilitated, or otherwise mitigated if the site is within 100 feet of surrounding lakes and streams, unless otherwise designated.

#### *Acceptable*

Close and rehabilitate at least eight of the undesignated dispersed sites found to be within 100 feet of surrounding lakes and streams within 5 years of plan signing, unless they otherwise are identified as a designated dispersed site.

#### *Differences*

The acceptable example has specific times and measurable terms.